Mr. BYLES's Thankſgiving SERMON,

March 6th, 1760.

BRITISH MUSEUM

A SERMON,

Delivered *March* 6th 1760.

Being a DAY appointed,

By Order of his MAJESTY,

As a *Public THANKSGIVING*,

For the late Signal SUCCESSES,

Granted to the BRITISH ARMS.

By *MATHER BYLES*, A. M.
Paſtor of the Firſt Church of CHRIST, in *New-London*.

Pſalm XLVIII, 9. *We have thought of thy loving Kindneſs, O GOD, in the Midſt of thy Temple.*

NEW-LONDON:
Printed and ſold by TIMOTHY GREEN,
MDCCLX.

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A Thankſgiving SERMON.

PSALM XCVI. 7, 8.

Give unto the LORD, O ye Kindreds of the People, give unto the LORD Glory and Strength. Give unto the LORD the Glory due unto his Name; bring an Offering, and come into his Courts.

THE Belief of a God and a Providence, certainly lies at the Foundation of all Religion; and as Religion was deſigned, by our all-wiſe Creator, to be the main Buſineſs of human Life, there is accordingly no Truth capable of more ſtrict Demonſtration than this; that there is a ſupream Spirit, who is the grand Superintendant of the Univerſe, & over-rules in every Event. This Propoſition, therefore, I ſhall take for granted, in the preſent Diſcourſe; as I hope there is no Perſon in this Aſſembly, who doubts it.

Wherever we turn our Eyes, we behold evident Traces of Infinite Wiſdom, Power, and Goodneſs, the Perfections of the Deity ſhining in his Works; and there are, frequently, marvelous interpoſitions of Divine Providence; which,

which, it would be, in the higheſt Degree, ſtupid in us, not to perceive; & ungrateful, not to acknowledge. All of us, who have lived any conſiderable Time upon Earth, muſt needs recollect many critical Seaſons of their Lives, when they have been preſerved in moſt imminent Dangers, by the immediate Hand of GOD; and plucked as Brands out of the Burning. And, no doubt, the wonderful Diſcoveries of another Day, will point us to many more ſuch ſurpriſing Inſtances of unbounded Grace, which we are not now conſcious to. I cannot but imagine that there are many Things of this Nature, which we know not now, but ſhall know hereafter; and that this conſtitutes one principal Part of the Entertainment of the glorified Spirits above; to review theſe critical Seaſons, in all their Circumſtances; and adore their Almighty Guardian, with rapturous Thankſgivings.---Seaſons, in which, if Matters had not happened exactly as they did, by a myſterious Concurrence of ſecond Cauſes, influenced by Him who conſtantly guides and animates the whole; (by him alone, without any Forethought, or Aſſiſtance of theirs; nay, in ſome Inſtances, contrary to their Wiſhes and Expectations) they muſt inevitably have been miſerable through all their Pilgrimage upon Earth, and perhaps to all Eternity.

But if the Finger of GOD is thus viſible in all the minute Incidents of human Life; if he graciouſly

graciously consults the Happiness of every Individual, determines the Times before appointed, and the Bounds of his Habitation; if the Hairs of our Head are all accurately numbred, and not a Sparrow falls to the Ground without our heavenly Father; certainly he is not an idle Spectator of the more important Transactions of the Globe, the Tumults of the People, the Revolution of States & Kingdoms. No;--He does his Sovereign Pleasure among the Armies of Heaven above, and among the Inhabitants of the Earth beneath; and it becomes us to regard the Work of the LORD, and to consider the Operation of his Hands. The Kingdom is the LORDS, and He is the Governor among the Nations. He blows the Trumpet, and they are roused to universal Battle: He waves the Olive Branch, and they are lulled in profound Peace.

When he pleases, he elevates the most detestable of Mankind to the Pinnacle of human Glory; the Disgrace of their Species, and the Scourge of their unhappy Subjects. When he pleases, he disappoints the haughty Tyrant, in the midst of his ambitious Enterprises; deposes him from his exalted Station; and dashes him to Pieces, as a Potter's Vessel. When he pleases, he places upon the Throne a Man of an excellent Spirit; gives Wisdom to his Counsels, and vigor to his Arms; preserves his invaluable Life, prevents him with the Blessings of Goodness, and sets a Crown of pure Gold upon his Head; makes him the Terror of his Enemies,

mies, and the Protector of his People. The proud *Nebuchadnezzar*, and the amiable *Cyrus*, are equally his Servants, and subject to his Controul; and, when he pleases, the abandoned *Saul* must fall a Sacrifice to his just Vengeance; that the devout *David*, the Man after his own Heart, may take the Charge of his distinguish'd *Israel*, and sway the Scepter in Righteousness.

He overules in all the various Revolutions of an Earthly Court; manages the minute Springs, which actuate the Wheels of Government; and influences the unsearchable Heart of Kings. Sometimes, for wise and holy Ends, He permits a corrupt Minister to obtain the Favour of his Sovereign, preside in the Cabinet, and sit at the Helm of Government; permits him to abuse the Confidence, and betray the Interests of his Royal Master; to embezzle the public Revenue, and prey upon the Bowels of the Constitution; to maintain a clandestine Correspondence with the open Enemies of his Country; to receive Bribes and Pensions from a foreign Court; and to triumph, perhaps, for a long Course of Years, in the Success of his treacherous and arbitrary Schemes; while the contemptible Tools of his Power grow rich with Rapine and Oppression, the wicked walk on every side, and the vilest of Men are exalted. When he pleases he raises up an honest Patriot, inspired with Sentiments of Virtue, who acts perpetually from the noblest Principles, despises the Gain of Oppression, and ſhuneth

keth his Hands from Holding of Bribes; animates him with a public Spirit, and a warm Affection to his bleeding Country; furniſhes him with an extenſive Capacity, and what is ſtill more valuable, an uncorrupted Heart; enlarges his Influence, and ſucceeds his Meaſures; makes him, at once, the Darling of his Prince, and the Favourite of a flouriſhing Nation; while his Eyes are upon the Faithful of the Land, that they may dwell with him, and he is ſerved by ſuch as walk in a perfect Way. So the infamous *Haman* was baniſhed from the Preſence of King *Ahaſuerus*, and received the juſt Demerit of his Crimes; that the upright *Mordecai* might ſucceed him, accepted of the Multitude of his Brethren, ſeeking the Wealth of his People, and ſpeaking Peace to all his Seed.

But let us leave the Confinement of the Court, extend our Views, and take a Survey of the Warlike Field; covered with regular Encampments, furrowed with Trenches, or glittering with hoſtile Arms. There we behold the reſolute Troops in their intrepid March; the gallant Commanders levelling the deſtructive Inſtruments of Death; and the gilded Banners, unfurled, and waving in the Wind. Suddenly, the gay Scene vaniſhes from our Eyes; all is enveloped in Smoke, and Flame, and Sulphur. Hark! how confuſed the Din of the Battle, the Thunder of

the Captains, and the Shouting; while the Groans of the Vanquiſhed, and the Acclamations of the Conqueror, and all the horrid Diſcord of War, rore thro' the Valley, and are echoed from the neighbouring Hills! Anon, the Noiſe abates, the Smoke diſſipates, and what a ghaſtly Spectacle is exhibited to our View! the moſt vigorous and athletick Bodies, with their brawney Limbs, once the Terror of the Mighty in the Land of the Living; but now, pale, bloody, and ſcattered promiſcuous, Thouſands and ten Thouſands, Heaps upon Heaps, cover the Plain, and compleat the Carnage. And is not the Almighty Hand ſtill conſpicuous? ſhould we not acknowledge and adore it? 'Tis He alone who can give the Victory, and determine the dubious Conteſt, when the Fate of an Empire hangs in Suſpence, and waits for the Deciſion of an Hour. When he pleaſes he can ſcatter a Panick thro' the braveſt Troops, and infatuate an Army of the moſt experienced Veterans. 'Tis He who directs the military Counſels, and ſteels the Heart of the ſucceſsful General. Every deſcending Sword is guided by Him, and every random Shot executes his Commiſſion.

He can level the proudeſt Cities, demoliſh their lofty Bulwarks, and lay low the Haughtineſs of the Terrible. At his ſovereign Nod, the

the Walls of *Jericho* muſt fall down proſtrate, and pave a Path for the conquering *Joſhua*.

'Tis He alſo who reigns LORD of the boundleſs Ocean, holds the Winds in His Graſp, and comprehends the Waters in the Hollow of His Hand. Fleets and Navies, protected by Him, ride in Triumph upon the Face of the Deep. He ſteers them in their trackleſs Courſe, ſwells their proſperous Sails, and waſts them to the whiſh'd-for Haven. When He pleaſes, he ſcatters them in His Wrath, and diſperſes them with the Breath of His Mouth. The Clouds gather and blacken, the Tempeſt rages, the loud Surges ſome, and the foundering Veſſels ſink like Lead in the fathomleſs Profound, or ly broken upon the Shore in ſhattered Fragments. He commands, "Peace, be Still;" the Winds and the Waters obey Him;---not a Breath of diſobedient Air ruffles the ſerene Surface of the Flood.

'Tis He over-rules, when contending Squadrons diſpute the Sovereignty of the Seas, and denounce Vengeance from the Mouth of their Cannon. He ſits the irreſiſtible Umpire, weighs their different Pretenſions in his impartial Ballance: He frowns and they are defeated; and Victory attends His Smile.

Thus we have taken an imperfect Survey of the Infinite GOD, as He manages the Wheels of Providence, and determines the Fate of Nations; one Foot being upon the Sea, and the other

other upon the dry Land. Should we not acknowledge His Supreme Authority; and fall proſtrate at His Footſtool, in humble Adoration; when, like the Prophet, in raptured Viſion, we behold this Appearance or the Likeneſs of the Glory of the LORD? Should we not unite in the ſublime Aſcription of the Pſalmiſt? Pſal. lxxxvi. 8.—10. "Among the Gods "there is none like unto Thee, O LORD; nei"ther are there any Works like unto thy "Works. All Nations whom Thou haſt "made, ſhall come and worſhip before Thee, "O LORD; and ſhall glorify thy Name. "For Thou art Great, and doſt wondrous "Things: Thou art GOD alone.

Were our Nation, at this Day, in calamitous Circumſtances, would it not be incumbent upon us, to humble ourſelves under the mighty Hand of GOD, to deprecate the Divine Wrath, and implore the Smiles of His Countenance? And while we are bleſt with ſo remarkable a Series of Proſperity and Succeſs, while the Almighty ſo wonderfully aſſerts our Cauſe, and our Enemies flee before us; while every Expreſs that arrives from our Frontiers, and every Packet that croſſes the *Atlantick*, adds a new Article to the joyful Tidings, and a freſh Laurel to the *Britiſh* Brows; it is equally our Duty to adore the Supream Benefactor, and comply with the Injunction of the Text; "Give unto the LORD, O ye Kindreds of the

"People,

"People, give unto the LORD Glory and "Strength. Give unto the LORD the Glory "due unto His Name; bring an Offering, "and come into his Courts."

It is the Honor and the Happineſs of this much-favoured Nation, that we have a devout Monarch upon the Throne, who enjoins this Practice upon us by his Authority, and recommends it by his royal Example: and it is at his Call, by an expreſs Order from the Throne, that we now aſſembled together at this ſolemn Feſtival.

And now, what a Scene of Wonder opens to our View! Good GOD! what an aſtoniſhing Scene of Wonders! Methinks, a univerſal Tranſport animates every Countenance, & ſparkles in every Eye. Who can recount the innumerable Favours, beſtowed upon our Nation and it's Allies, in the Year paſt; that Year much to be remembred; that diſtinguiſhed Year in the Annals of *Great-Britain*? Who is equal to the boundleſs Taſk? What Tongue but falters, while the big Ideas crowd upon the Mind, and labor for Utterance? A few, out of the immenſe Multitude, the Time will ſuffer me but juſt to hint at.

The LORD of Hoſts has wonderfully appeared in Vindication of the *Proteſtant* Cauſe, even our Enemies themſelves being Judges. He has ſupported our illuſtrious Ally, the King of *Pruſſia*; a Name ever dear to thoſe who

who have the Cauſe of Religion and Liberty at Heart;--ſupported him againſt one of the moſt dangerous Confederacies, that could be formed by the Powers of Antichriſt; while the Arms of the *Empire* have been levelled againſt him, the turbulent Court of *France* have conſpired his Ruin, and the barbarous Troops of *Ruſſia* have thirſted for his Blood. Expoſed as he frequently has been, amidſt all the Tumult and Horrors of Battle; Thouſands falling at his Side, and Ten Thouſands at his right Hand; GOD has ever protected him, and for the moſt Part, has crowned him with Conqueſt.

The Preſervation of his Majeſty's *German* Dominions; the Expulſion of the *French* from the Electorate of *Hanover*; and the repeated Succeſſes which have attended the glorious Prince *Ferdinand*, call alſo this Day for our Gratitude and Praiſe.

When we leave theſe foreign Proſpects, and take a ſhort Survey of thoſe which ſtill more nearly concern us; When we behold one of the beſt of Kings placed upon the *Britiſh* Throne, who has ever approved himſelf the benevolent Father of his People; who juſtly ſuppoſes his own Honor to conſiſt in the Freedom of his Subjects, and places his higheſt Happineſs in their Proſperity; who deſpiſes the abject Submiſſion of Slaves, while he poſſeſſes all thoſe Hearts that are not dead

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to every grateful Sentiment;—his invaluable Life protracted to an Age beyond that of any of his Predeceſſors, his uncommon Virtues bloſſoming in his Royal Race, & his Counſels influenced by one of the moſt unſpotted Characters in the Nation;—a Miniſter, whoſe Wiſdom and Integrity have been ſufficiently proved, whoſe honeſt Heart knows no Diſguiſe, whoſe Hands were never ſtained with Bribery and Oppreſſion, and who bears a ſteady Teſtimony againſt the prevailing Luxury of the Age;—no Tool of Tyranny, no Slave to Ambition, no Penſioner to the Court of *France*;—When we behold the glorious GOD, in the moſt critical Seaſon, when we had become the Deriſion of our Enemies, and the Contempt of our Neighbours, raiſing up ſuch a Deliverer to the Nation, and reſtoring it *at once* to the utmoſt Pitch of its primitive Glory;—our Armies again formidable upon the Continent, our Fleets ſovereign upon the Ocean, Victory conſtantly attending our Flags, the *Britiſh* Thunder alarming the moſt diſtant Regions, and irreſiſtible in all Quarters of the Earth;—and when we hear our venerable Sovereign pronouncing, with amiable Devotion, "I thank my GOD for theſe ſignal Victo-"ries;"—Can we forbear aſcribing the Victory to him, acknowledging that His right Hand and His holy Arm have gotten it?

In

In vain has the proud Monarch of *France*, endeavoured to retrieve his Glory, by a threatned Invasion of *Great Britain*: his vast military Preparations, and empty Gasconades, have only served to sink the *Royal Bankrupt* so much the deeper in Distress, and render him more compleatly contemptible and ridiculous. For the most Part, his insignificant Squadrons have thought it prudent to anchor quietly in Port, guarded by a *British* Fleet: or if, at any Time, they have ventured to parade upon the Ocean; they have had sufficient Reason to repent of their Rashness. Their Supplies have been cut off, and Numbers of their Capital Ships have been demolished. Nay, one of their principal Harbours has been actually entred: the *British* Standard has floated triumphant upon the Continent of *France*; while their Stores and boasted Magazines have blazed as a Bonfire, upon the joyful Occasion.

In the *West Indies*, we behold *Guadaloupe* and its Dependencies, surrendring to a small naval Force, and a handful of gallant Troops; —one of the most valuable and important of the *American* Islands.

When we turn our Eyes to *this* Continent, we have opened a new Theatre of marvelous Events; we are surrounded with a fresh Series of surprising Mercies.

It will not be amiss for us to recollect, upon this Occasion, that it is but a little while, since our

our Affairs wore a moſt melancholly Aſpect; and a univerſal Conſternation appeared in every Countenance. You may remember the diſmal Seaſon, when, Year after Year, the ALMIGHTY frowned upon our Enterpriſes and Expeditions; and an inſulting Enemy ravaged our Borders. Our Fortreſſes were taken and demoliſhed; our Troops intimidated and deſtroyed, or carried Captive to a foreign Land: or, perhaps, they were overwhelmed with a groundleſs Panic; perhaps, they ſaw the Shadow of the Mountains as if they were Men, and miſtook Rocks for an Encampment;——the Sound of a ſhaken Leaf terrified them, and they fled when none purſued! Perhaps, "the mighty "Men of *Babylon* were affrighted, they had "forborn to fight, they remained in their "Holds, their Might failed, and they became "as Women!"---Be that as it will, for it is not my Buſineſs to charge the Fault any where; certain it is, that one Year of Diſappointments rolled away after another: The Harveſt was paſt, the Summer was ended, and ſtill we were not ſaved. The howling Inhabitants of the Wilderneſs triumphed upon our Frontiers, were decorated with our Spoils, and glutted with the Blood of our deareſt Friends.—"O! that "my Head were Waters, and mine Eyes a "Fountain of Tears, that I might weep, Day "and Night, for the Slain of the Daughter "of my People!"—Then it was, that we

poured out our Complaint in the Bitterneſs of our Souls: we wept between the Porch and the Altar, "Spare thy People, O LORD, give not "Thine Heritage to Reproach, ſuffer not the "Heathen to triumph over us!"——At length GOD has heard our Prayer, and avenged the Cauſe of his ſuffering Servants.

And now, my Brethren, what a ſtriking Contraſt! How is the Scene reverſed! GOD has proſpered us in every Attempt, and cauſed our Enemies to flee before us.—Let us pauſe a little, and enumerate our Conqueſts.—We are poſſeſſed of the important Paſs and Fort of *Niagara*; & have defeated a large Body of the Enemy, which were marching to its Relief.—*Fort du Queſne*, (a Diſpute concerning which, if you remember, was one principal Occaſion of the preſent War,) has now changed its Name to *Pittſburgh*; in Honor of that Immortal Patriot, who needs no ſuch feeble Monument to perpetuate his Memory.—The formidable Lines at *Ticonderoga*, where our Army met with ſuch a ſhameful Repulſe, about a Twelve-Month before, are ſurrendred to the well known Conqueror of *Louiſbourg*.—And the Fortreſs at *Crown-Point*, which has been the Object of ſo many fruitleſs Expeditions, from theſe Northern Colonies, is abandoned by the Enemy, and occupied by a *Britiſh* Garriſon.

We

We may juſtly, upon this Occaſion, applaud the Bravery of our Troops, and the wiſe Conduct of our experienced General. This is but equitable : It is rendring Honor to whom Honor is due. But ſtill we muſt remember that this is the LORD's Doing, and it is marvelous in our Eyes! "Give unto the "LORD O ye Kindreds of the People, give "unto the LORD Glory and Strength. Give "unto the LORD the Glory due unto HIS "Name; bring an Offering, and come into "His Courts."

And yet, theſe were but ſmall Things in Thine Eyes, O our GOD; for we have ſtill a *new Song* to ſing, and the moſt glorious Inſtance of Succeſs is yet unrelated. "Shout, ſaid *Joſhua*, "for the LORD hath given you "the CITY!" The proud City of QUEBECK compleats our Conqueſts, and adds new Luſtre to the Important Year. This is, properly, ſtriking at the Foundation of the *French* Power in *America*. In our former Acquiſitions, we did, as it were, but lop the Branches: but, Thanks be to GOD! the Ax is now laid to the Root of the Tree. Happy would our pious Predeceſſors have been, could they have ſeen this diſtinguiſhed Period: but it was denied them!—Bleſſed are our Eyes, for they behold it; and our Ears, for they hear the joyful Tidings! The Capital of *Canada*, the Metropolis of *French America*, is ſurrendred

to

to our Arms! When we conſider how many fruitleſs Attempts have been made by us & our Fathers, for the Reduction of this important Place; how immenſe the Blood and Treaſure which have been expended, to no Purpoſe, in former Armaments; and the inconſiderable Number of Troops by which it was at laſt accompliſhed; it ſhould aggrandiſe our Ideas of this glorious Action, as it will conſecrate the memorable Name of WOLFE, to the lateſt Poſterity.

Amidſt all our Rejoycing this Day, that gallant General demands a Tear, to be dropt upon his Funeral Urn;—that gallant General who, in the Bloom of Years, diſplayed ſuch conſummate military Skill; and expired ſo bravely, in the Arms of Conqueſt;

* Great while he liv'd, but greater when he died.

But, my Brethren, we ſhould realiſe the "Voice of GOD in this Event. "Ceaſe ye "from Man, whoſe Breath is in his Noſtrils, "for wherein is he to be accounted of?" We ſhould look beyond ſecond Cauſes; and acknowledge that "there is *none* like "unto the GOD of *Jeſurun*, who has ridden "in the Heaven, for our Help; and in His "Excellency upon the Skies. "Give unto the "LORD

* *Addiſon.*

" LORD, O ye Kindreds of the People, give " unto the LORD Glory and Strength. Give " unto the LORD the Glory due unto His " Name; bring an Offering and come into " His Courts."

And indeed, the Hand of GOD is conſpicuous in every Article of this Expedition. It was He who guided our Fleet thro' the difficult Navigation of *St. Lawrence*; and protected them in a violent Tempeſt, to which they were expoſed ſoon after their Arrival. It was He who enabled our Forces to make their Encampment, with ſcarce the Loſs of a Man; who plentifully furniſhed them with the Neceſſaries of Life; who was the Health of their Countenance, and their GOD; and who preſerved their ſcattered Parties from the lurking Savages of the Wilderneſs. It was He who ſupported them thro' all the Fatigues of a dangerous Campaign, and guarded them from the fatal Meſſengers of Death. It was He who infatuated the unhappy *Montcalm*, to forſake the Advantages of his Situation, and riſk a deciſive Engagement. It was He who, in the Day of Battle, inſpired our Army with irreſiſtible Reſolution, and gave them the Victory over ſuch ſuperior Numbers. It was He who intimidated the vanquiſhed Enemy, and opened the Gates of the devoted City.

" Give

" Give unto the LORD, O ye Kindreds of " the People, give unto the LORD Glory and " Strength. Give unto the LORD the Glory " due unto his Name; bring an Offering, and " come into his Courts. " Certainly, our Thankſgiving, this Day, ſhould be ſomething more than an empty Form; an inſignificant Compliance with Cuſtom. Our Mirth ſhould not be carnal and ſenſual: but we ſhould realiſe that we are reaſonable Creatures, and Profeſſors of the Name of JESUS. Shall we ſuffer the ſacred Solemnities of this Day, to degenerate into a diſſolute Frolick; or to be cloſed with Midnight Uproar?——" Forbid it, " O our GOD!"—— Amidſt all our Flow of Spirits, and all the plentiful Entertainments that crown our Tables, may we remember, and adore our dear Benefactor; and may our Praiſes aſcend before Him, from pure Hearts, grateful as Incenſe.—It is the LORD who hath done theſe great Things for us, whereof we are glad. ——What then ſhall we render to the LORD, for all His Benefits?

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FINIS.